

HOW WE MINIMIZE OUR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

Researchers produce a particularly large amount of carbon emissions, especially by using air transport to travel to conferences. This means that academics cannot expect to be taken seriously in the debate on the climate crisis if they do not themselves implement the measures they propose. We have to put our own house in order first, if we want others to listen and to engage in activities of climate protection.

As researchers with a global orientation and engaging in international projects, it is impossible to completely avoid all the negative environmental impacts emerging from air travel. Some travel may simply be unavoidable, for example, in order to carry out data gathering field research. And then we also do not want to miss the physical presence of scholars we are studying and working with.

Yet, we must strive to drastically reduce and minimize our environmental footprint while successfully accomplishing our research and teaching activities. At the Chair of Comparative Politics at the University of St.Gallen we have deliberated in an open manner and democratically agreed to apply a strict policy to reduce air travel and travel more ecologically. To achieve this goal, we rely on the following measures:

- Conference attendance at transatlantic locations is reduced to highly exceptional cases, in which there is an extraordinary professional interest in attending the meeting. As a general rule, attendance of a transatlantic conferences by (post-)doctoral researchers is limited to every second year, and to papers that are either new or considerably revised. An extraordinary professional interest exists when, in addition to presenting a paper, further activities are agreed, such as the organization of a panel or a pre-conference event, the active participation in such an event or a podium discussion, research meeting with a co-supervisor or other expert, and interviews or archival visits at the conference location.
- Air travel to European locations is accepted only for long distances, extremely inconvenient connections or time constraints due to teaching, administrative or other obligations. Strong priority will be given to conferences and workshops that can be reached by (night) train.
- The chair will also strictly try to reduce air travel when inviting guest speakers and visitors.
- If air travel is unavoidable, the chair will compensate negative environmental impacts via donations to [myclimate](#), a Swiss certified organization engaging in neutralizing carbon emissions through investments in climate protection projects.
- The chair will report yearly its carbon dioxide emissions emerging from air travel.

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